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# Romantic fiction today: supply and demand

Literatura romantyczna dzisiaj: podaż i popyt

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# Selected publications:

Youth books today: influencing factors [Książki dla młodzieży dzisiaj: czynniki wpływu] [in:] Publishing in Russia and abroad: history, current status, problems and prospects: Proceedings of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference of Young Scientists on the Day of Russian Science February 19 [Publikowanie w Rosji i za granicą: historia, stan obecny, problemy i perspektywy], 2013



- Multi-genre contemporary youth books [Multirodzajowe współczesne książki dla młodzieży]
  [in:] World literature for and about children: Materials XVIII All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference [Światowa literatura dla i o dzieciach], 2013
- Internal factors impact the book: On the pragmatics of publication [Wewnętrzne czynniki wpływające na książkę: o pragmatyce publikacji] [in:] Humanitarian challenges of modern information society [Wyzwania humanitarne nowoczesnego społeczeństwa informacyjnego], 2013.

Ekaterina Russkikh – doktorantka w Państwowym Uniwersytecie Humanistycznym w Kirowie (Rosja). Głównym tematem jej naukowych badań jest identyfikacja pragmatycznych i estetycznych środków wpływających na literaturę dla młodzieży.

Young adults – particular group of people that comes from the children's age and prepares to step into adulthood. Young people are most receptive to new knowledge, have not yet well-established beliefs and worldview (see for example: Lyubimov A. 2014). Therefore, it is important to lay-in consciousness forming moral personality, moral, inward and esthetic values. Otherwise, the tendency of "latent spirituality" among young people will reduce the cultural and spiritual level of the whole society. This trend is described as "a situation where young men and women are not even aware of the possibility of spiritual life and the existence of moral laws, or have this very vague idea and live by the principle of <here and now>, focusing on their actual needs and desires" (Morozova E. 2011).

We studied a group of readers aged 15-17 years – usually high school students or university students, students of colleges and technical schools. Education is their primary aim. Educational environment, writes Morozova, is an important factor in the development of spiritual maturity of youth (2011).

Strelkova examines the modernization of the modern Russian school, which results in a reduced number of hours of literature lessons. Lowering the teaching of literature [...] related to the overall project of modernization of education, with the reduction and simplification of school lessons in mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, [...] Russian history [...] (2004, p. 170-171). Reduction of hours of basic subjects is being compensated by adding extra hours of new disciplines – informatics, for example. At the same time, it appears that reading pupils absorb new information much quicker and fuller than their non-reading peers. Thus, the optimization of the learning system can adversely affect the level of education in general. The information, which was red in childhood is often the main information luggage a person carries throughout his later life (Muzhikova E. 2013, p. 16). Turns out that the observed decline of culture and spirituality in the youth environment, and society in general is caused by the crisis of education.

To improve crisis of reading among students, it is necessary to compensate for the reduction of literature lessons by increase in extracurricular reading.

Nowadays students spend their out-of-school time online. With the advent of the Internet, grows entertainment. Nevertheless, besides computer games and virtual communication, development of new technologies involves the performance of educational and cultural functions and familiarizing the user with reading the literature. The latter function is performed by the literary sites and online booksellers.

In order to identify the most popular genres and quality of the offer, we checked following well-known Russian literary sites and online literature shops: lit-portal.ru, livelib.ru, knigozavr.ru, kniga.ru, Labirint.ru, biblio-globus.ru. During the work it was found that the current domestic sites offer a choice of literature on demand. However, a special section for young people is quite rare. As on the

shelves in the bookstore and the library, and on specialized literary sites, most frequently used literature selection is aimed at adult or children audience. Literature for youth one needs to choose from thematic sections. Most often it is science fiction, fantasy, mystery and adventure. Most of the best-selling, both foreign and domestic prose, are also suitable for young reader — usually a fantastic and mystical novels. The most popular Russian authors, whose work is aimed at the youth audience — in fiction: Lukyanenko, Nikitin, Krapivin, brothers Strugatskie, Pelevin. Popular among young people are works by Akunin whose style is folk-history, as well as books by authoresses Murashova, Rubina, Aromshtam, Ulitskaya, with their attention to the personal character.

What unites the works of these different authors? First of all – unsightly reality surrounding the heroes and transformation of this reality into the world of fantasy. Unique for this type of literature is the omnipresent conflict arising between the reality, and individual's world of imaginary truths. In such disunity of the two realities manifests itself the principle of dualism, which is fundamental feature of romantic esthetic.

In order to identify common features of modern romantic literature, we introduce the definition of romance. According to explanatory dictionary of the Russian language, romanticism – trend in the literature and art of the first quarter of the XIX century, characterized by an idealization of the past, isolation from reality, the cult of personal and humane (Ozhegov S. 1953). Works of the Romantic era glorified events of the past centuries, valor, justice, and other high-quality characters, their physical strength and beauty. Examples of romantic works are tales by Grimm Brothers, Byron, Lermontov.

Let's consider the modern reader's necessity of a romantic prose. Online Fundamental Library defines the characteristic of early romanticism as fiction, blurred images, the neglect of verisimilitude, the idealization of heroes and heroines in the spirit of the late conditional chivalry, the action in the indefinite past or vaguely distant countries, addicted to the mysterious and magical (2014 [online]). The characteristic of romanticism is the opposition to the fantastic, imaginary component to the life's realities. Thus, despite the fact that era of romanticism had finished in the XIX century, romantic component in the literature is one of the most important aesthetic factors for today's youth.

But the presence of a fantasy world is not a condition implying that all works for young people should be written exclusively in the genre of science fiction or fantasy. Juvenile literature exists in a variety of genres, and promotes the formation of multi-genre literary preferences. What qualities, beside fantasy and fiction are the ones of romantic movement, that today's young reader can identify with?

Kudryashov in his thesis contrasted romantic values of mass culture, active participation in the consciousness of modern man. A comparison reveals the roman-

tic culture of individual personal values, fight against evil, a sense of the inexhaustible possibilities of being. Values of mass culture call for the correspondence to the ideals of mass protest and inconsistencies common system life for the sake of pleasure and satisfaction of consumer interests (2013, p. 40-41).

Sobkin and Burelomova at the study of the literary preferences of high school students say that young man questioned the common values on which he was guided in his childhood. High school students have the desire for self-realization, self-determination, a rethinking of values. Thus there is a kind of transition from the passive position of the object receiving the ready knowledge, to the position of active sensing, analyzing stakeholder (2012, p. 50).

Desire for individualization, in opposition to the society makes clear product having romantic elements for modern youth. The understandable of desire, the dive into the inner world of the work are the reasons for the popularity of works of fiction as well as the lyrical content of the young.

The novel *Knights of forty islands* by Lukyanenko compares the boys growing up with an interactive game. Battle, victory, injury, betrayal, passionate infatuation, though occur on an unknown planet and masked militant swords and castles, but are a reflection of the common problems and experiences of adolescents and young adults 15-17 years old. It is no accident and split – "photocopying" characters. Being a romantic, in love with the mood, especially in adolescence, people live in two realities: their real life with its immediate problems and their hidden life.

Contrary preceded classicism, romanticism different elevation descriptions, rich imagery, light and even "childish" attitude to life issues. In novels and stories by V. Krapivin young heroes dream of adventures at sea and the battle for truth and even fly: by the carpet, the poplar shirt, the blue flamingo. By these romantic motives the Krapivin's stories retain fabulousness, despite life's challenges and ordeals.

Fictional world helps heroes to survive the terrible reality. The sad story *Happy* by Ulitskaya is about married couple who tragically lost their son. But people are happy of their memories of this short, five-year idyll. Protagonist of the story *Class correction* by Murashova – cerebral palsy school children Jura Malkov has a fantastic gift to fall into a fantastic world where the boy can run faster than anyone.

The juxtaposition of the main characters of the gray everyday life is a principle of any romantic work. High order of human soul, nobility and courage confront philistine thought and dull realities. In this confrontation, the two dissociation does take *dualism* somehow reflected in any romantic works. Romantic writers experiencing turmoil of modern life, looking for ways to escape from reality and at the same time to understand it. The disappointment of the ordinary sense pushes the romantics to endure events in an idealized country. This fantasy world clearly or completely unnoticed strokes prescribed in any romantic work elevates

the romantics on the prose of life, liberating the diversity of their identities. Undeniable contribution to the development of romantic prose of the spiritual and cultural level of the whole society as well as young people – the creator of the future society.

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#### Abstract

The article focuses on culture and moral problems of the youth. The hypothesis of a romantic component and «dualism system» at the books for young readers as a necessary attractive element is discussed. The author concludes that the romantic component of the inner world of a literature creation is close and interesting for modern young readers.

### **Abstrakt**

Autorka artykułu zajęła się kulturą i problemami moralnymi wśród młodzieży. Analizuje hipotezę składnika romantycznego i "systemu dualnego" w książkach dla młodych czytelników jako niezbędnego elementu uatrakcyjniającego przekaz. Autorka dochodzi do wniosku, iż romantyczny składnik wewnętrznego świata w kreowaniu literatury jest bliski i interesujący dla współczesnej młodzieży.